Letting off North Korean ship

1511. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a North Korean ship caught and later released by the Coast Guard and Customs off the port of Kandla in 2000, was carrying missile spares to Pakistan for its clandestine programme;

(b) whether the ship was allowed to leave against intelligence warning at the instance of Ministry of External Affairs which accepted the captain's plea that the ship was bound for Libya; and

(c) whether it was serious breach of national security in view of the fact that Islamabad has test fired missiles capable of carryig nuclear warheads with the obvious help of North Korea?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Indo-US Air Force joint exercise at Agra

1512. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Air Force an US Air Force have held joint exercises at Agra in India;

(b) if so, the benefits that will accrue to Indian Air Force by these exercises;

(c) the number of aircrafts and Air Force personnel of both services that took part in these exercises;

(d) whether such joint exercises by defence forces of the two countries are to be held in future also; and

(e) if so, details of the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) benefits which will accrue to IAF would be: